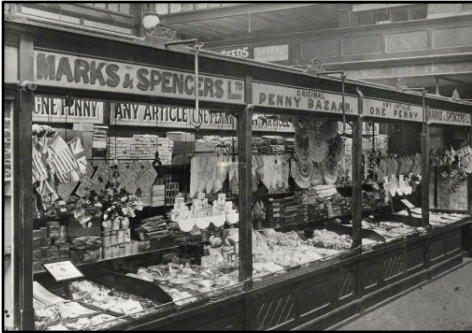


Food Timeline

From covering the basics to making everyday delicious – how our food has developed since 1884



Cardiff, c1900

1884

Our Penny Bazaars sold some basic food items, such as flour, spices and confectionery.

1920s

In the 1920s our Confectionery Departments sold a wide variety of items from pear drops to brandy snaps.

Licquorice Allsorts.	Sharps Toffee
Lemonade Powder	Mixed Fruit Jellies
Sumor's Chocolates	Fruit Delights
Tangerines	Marsipen Mixture
Pear Drops	Broken Chocolate Cream
Ginger Snaps	Empress Shortbread
Assorted Creams	Brandy Snaps
Tea Biscuits	Id. Chocolate Wafers.

Staff Bulletin, 1927



Walls ice cream bar, 1940s

1927

Ice cream counters were introduced in 1927, two years later we began selling freshly made sandwiches from the same counters.



Watford, 1939

1931

M&S food departments opened in all stores, selling canned goods, fruit, vegetables and cakes.



Blackpool, 1938

1934

Provisions including cooked meats, sausages, pies, cheese and bacon were introduced to selected stores.



Edmonton Café Bar, 1930s

1935

Café Bars opened in a selection of stores. Customers could order hot meals including chops, steaks or fish and chips.



Fruit display, 1930s

1937

We established our own fruit distribution centre in London's Covent Garden – a move to work directly with producers and suppliers that continues today.



Café Bar, 1951

1941

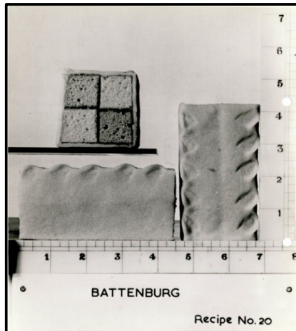
Food rationing was introduced. Café Bar and restaurant meals were not rationed, though some foods were in short supply. Our Café bars were very popular with customers as meals could be purchased without having to use up ration coupons.



Wood Green, 1947

1947

We launched our first trials of self-service food shopping at Wood Green store, with customers selecting their own food from open shelving and using wire baskets to carry it to the cash register.



Recipe testing, 1950

1948

After the war we appointed Nathan Goldenberg as our first Technical Executive and Chief Chemist. His Food Technology department went on to improve quality control, hygiene and safety standards across M&S food departments.



Swiss rolls c1960

1950s

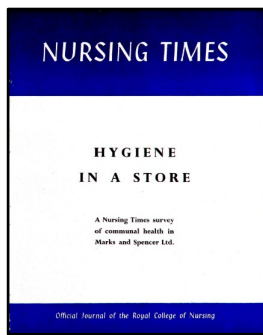
Our Cake Department worked closely with suppliers to produce high quality, fast-selling cakes which could be produced in volume. Swiss Rolls and Gateaux were amongst the first cakes produced for M&S in this way. Following the de-rationing of sugar in 1953, our range of cakes and biscuits expanded rapidly.



Telebars, 1955

1954

The first use of 'St Michael' on foods was likely to have been on a packet of Almond Crisps.



Nursing Times, Sep 1960

1960

Nursing Times published a survey on hygiene in M&S stores, with recommendations on how techniques could be transferred to hospitals. It included praise of the smoking ban, introduced in 1959.



Chilled chicken advert, 1972

1960

Fresh, chilled chicken was launched in stores for the first time in newly installed chilled cabinets – it was an immediate success with customers. We advertised that all 'St Michael' chickens reached the customer only two days after being slaughtered.

1965

Armorage House opened adjacent to Marble Arch as our first separate food hall.



Armorage House, 1965

1971

Frozen foods were trialed at Edgware Road store and then extended to 100 stores by 1973. Products ranged from peas and fish to foods such as lasagne.



Frozen foods advert
1970s



Sell-by dates, 1972

1972

The Food Technology Department introduced 'sell-by' dates to wrappers, an innovation adopted by other retailers and which would later become a legal requirement.



Ravioli, 1973

1973

Foil-wrapped, boil-in-the bag, 'convenience foods', such as Ravioli, were trialed in 1973, with more boil-in-the-bag products on offer by 1974.



Pilau rice, 1985

1973

Package holidays were becoming more popular, so M&S food ranges begin to reflect the public's interest in new cuisine, such as a new range of frozen Indian dishes that included chicken korma and pork vindaloo.



Chicken Kiev, 1990

1979

Our ready-prepared Chicken Kiev was launched. It was so successful we set up a new factory dedicated to producing the product.



Marble Arch, 1982

1980

Sandwiches were re-launched – the most popular was Prawn and Mayonnaise, launched in 1981



Vegetable Moussaka,
1985

1985

A new range of vegetarian main meals, including lasagne and moussaka was introduced.



Calorie Counted Menu,
1985

We also launched the Calorie Counted Menu range with all seven meals containing less than 300 calories.



Pinner, 1987

1987

We opened our first food only store at Pinner, North London. Customers were offered late night shopping every night, and a 200 space car park next to the store.



Percy Pigs, 1992

1992

Percy Pigs were launched. By 2014 over one billion Percy Pigs had been sold.



Count On Us, 2000s

2000

The Count On Us range was launched, with meals containing less than 3% fat and reduced calories.



Organic granola, 2007

The growth of the organic market in the UK led to a relaunch of the M&S organic range. It had previously had to be withdrawn in 1993 due to lack of demand. By 2000 we sold 150 organic products in 150 stores.



Free range eggs advert

2002

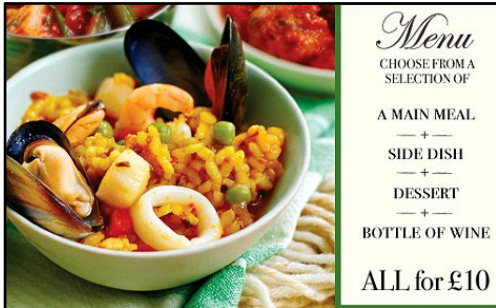
By 2002 all eggs used in our food range came from free range hens.



Melt in the Middle Chocolate Pudding advert

2004

Our first 'This is not just food, this is M&S food' television advert was aired. One of the most iconic adverts from this campaign featured the Melt in the Middle Chocolate Pudding. When aired, sales of the product increased 3000%.



Dine In advert, 2000s

2008

The popular Dine In For Two For £10.00 promotion was launched.



Fuller Longer, 2010

2010

The Fuller Longer range was developed with expert advice from scientists at the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health at the University of Aberdeen, renowned for its ground-breaking research on effective weight-loss.



Vitamin D advert, 2016

2016

We introduced a special yeast containing Vitamin D which improves bone health. Two slices of bread now included 15% of the RDA for Vitamin D.



Made Without advert, 2018

2018

We became the first UK retailer to have an own-brand range of gluten-free pastries. The 'Made Without' selection included croissants, chocolate twists and apricot pastries, all made with creamy French butter.



Our Best Ever Steak Pie advert , 2018

Our Best Ever range was a hit with customers, with our Best Ever Prawn Sandwich, Burger, and Steak Pie all bestsellers.



Our No-Pork Sausoyges, 2019

2019

We launched food ranges suitable for customers with specific food preferences. New lines included Plant Kitchen designed for vegans, Halal and Kosher meat ranges.

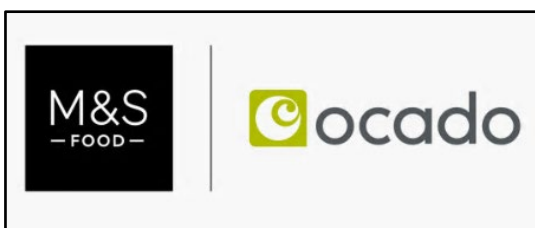
We opened the first 'Food Renewal' store at Hempstead Valley in July. New hero displays for Produce, larger Bakery, Frozen and Ambient sections, all encouraging families to do a complete shop with us.



Hempstead Valley, 2019

2020

Our joint venture with Ocado launched. This included a new Food to Order offer, allowing the full availability of our food ranges to be delivered straight to your door.



Logos, 2020



Food box contents, 2020

2020

In 2020 we also launched food boxes to support customers through the Covid-19 pandemic.



Chicken advert, 2022

2022

We became the first national retailer to sell 100% slower-reared, higher-welfare fresh chickens.



Value decor, 2024

2024

Following the launch of our Remarksable Value range in 2019, we invested in the price of over 200 products as part of our trusted value promise for 2024.



Brain ball, 2025

2025

We introduced a new range supporting brain health. The range focused on 6 essential nutrients that support brain function, which lots of people lack in their diet - Omega 3 (DHA), Iron, Zinc, Iodine, Folate, and Vitamin B12.



Only... Ingredients, 2026

The same year we launched our 'Only... ingredients' range, a selection of products made with minimal ingredients, including cereals and bread. The range expanded in 2026 to include everything from potato wedges and meatballs to ice cream and oat milk.



Retro chocolate bars, 2026

2026

The food team found four 1980s chocolate bars in the Archive and brought them back for 2026, complete with original St Michael packaging – Sparks, Jet, Coconut Grove and Now! This follows the success of the Take 4 bar in 2025, also inspired by a 1980s classic.